

Hamline University School of Law • Dispute Resolution Institute

Theories of Conflict  
Syllabus, J-term 2010

“There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” – Kurt Lewin

<b>Professor</b>	Dr. Timothy Hedeem, tkhedeem@yahoo.com, 770-423-6879
<b>Class meetings</b>	January 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , and 15 <sup>th</sup> , 9:00am – 4:30pm
<b>Course description</b>	This interdisciplinary course introduces students to important theoretical perspectives on our understanding of conflict and conflict response. Specifically, students explore the biological/ physiological, psychodynamic, social psychological, communication and sociological/political perspectives on conflict by reading and discussing major theoretical works within each perspective. Emphasis is on comparing and distinguishing key dimensions of these theories, such as the nature and sources of conflict, conflict escalation, conflict response, and the nature of the third party role. Classes follow an interactive format. Using case studies, exercises, and group discussion to draw upon personal experiences, including those involving race and social identity, the course explores the usefulness of each perspective to understanding the experience of conflict.
<b>Course texts</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Pruitt and Kim (“PK”), <i>Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement</i> (3/e)</li><li>2. Course readings posted on TWEN</li></ol> <p><i>Please note that readings and class meetings are designed to be complementary. Readings will inform class presentations and discussions, in-class material and exercises will expand upon readings.</i></p>
<b>Grading, Basis of Evaluation</b>	The grade for this course will be based on preparation and participation (10%) and two papers (30% for reflection paper, 60% for research paper).
<b><u>Preparation, participation</u></b>	Preparation, attendance and participation are key to learning in any context, especially in courses designed around in-class exercises and discussion.
<b><u>Reflection paper</u></b>	In a paper of 1,500-1,800 words (show word count at end of paper), focus on a discussion, reading, or exercise from class and relate the insights and lessons gleaned to a personal conflict experience. Please keep your presentation of the experience brief (less than 500 words). This paper does not require research or citations. Due: _____
<b><u>Research paper</u></b>	In a paper of 2,500-3,000 words (show word count at end of paper), apply three or more theories of conflict to a case of your choosing. Cases may be drawn from any context, from the interpersonal to the international, so long as multiple parties are involved. The goal is to demonstrate your mastery of

conflict theories through integration and application; that is, the paper will reflect your critical thinking through the selection of case, choice of theories, and presentation of relevant research concerning both the case and theories. Students should consult with the professor to determine the 'fit' of their topic with the assignment, to ensure adequate treatment in terms of depth and breadth. Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Grading is anonymous and consequently students should only include their exam number on their final paper. Your final paper should be submitted by uploading it to the TWEN "Assignment Drop-box". You do not need to deliver a physical copy to the Office of the Registrar.

You will need to know your 5 digit final exam number before you can upload the document.

If you do not know your final exam number:

- Go to Piperline ([http://www.hamline.edu/homepage\\_items/home/piperline.html](http://www.hamline.edu/homepage_items/home/piperline.html))
- Login to Secure Area
- Choose Student Services
- Click on Registration
- Click on Student Detail Schedule
- Select term January 2010
- Your final exam number is listed below total credit hours at the top of the page.

If you have questions regarding access to TWEN, contact Debra Berghoff at 651.523.2946 or [dberghoff@hamline.edu](mailto:dberghoff@hamline.edu).

**Attendance** at ALL class sessions is required.

## Course agenda

Before Jan 11<sup>th</sup>

**Read** as many of the readings as you can, preferably in the order they appear here

Monday,  
Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>

**Course overview, conflict overview, strategy (five readings)**

PK, Ch.1: Overview

PK, Ch.2: Nature and Sources

PK, Ch.3: Strategic Choice

Deutsch, "Justice and Conflict," pp.43-68 of *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (2/e), Jossey-Bass, 2006 (in reader)

Folger, Poole, and Stutman, "Theories of Conflict Interaction," pp.64-103, Ch. 3 of *Working Through Conflict* (5/e), Addison Wesley Longman, 2005 (in reader)

Tuesday,  
Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>

**Biology, power, contention (three readings)**

PK, Ch.4: Contentious Tactics

Opatow, "Aggression and Violence," pp.509-532 of *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (2/e), Jossey-Bass, 2006 (in reader)

Wilmot and Hocker, "Power: The Structure of Conflict," pp.95-128, Ch. 4 of *Interpersonal Conflict* (7/e), McGraw Hill, 2007 (in reader)

Thursday,  
Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>

**Escalation, culture (four readings)**

PK, Ch.5: Escalation

PK, Ch.6: Structural Change

PK, Ch.8: Persistence of Escalation

Kimmel, "Culture and Conflict," pp.625-648 of *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (2/e), Jossey-Bass, 2006 (in reader)

Friday,  
Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>

**Identity and groups, stalemate, de-escalation (four readings)**

PK, Ch.9: Stalemate and De-escalation

PK, Ch.10: Problem-solving

Petonito, "Racial Discourse and Enemy Construction," pp.19-40, Ch. 2 of *Social Conflicts and Collective Identities*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2000 (in reader)

Feminia, "Emotional Actor: Foreign Policy in the Falkland/Malvinas War," pp.41-65, Ch.3 of *Social Conflicts and Collective Identities*, 2000 (in reader)